

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 200857Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1060

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: "NEW" DIRECTIONS FOR INDIA'S COMMUNIST PARTIES

1. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF A-88 POUCH TO
THE DEPARTMENT ON APRIL 21, 1978

2. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI) AND THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA - MARXIST (CPM) BOTH HELD
NATIONAL CONVENTIONS IN THE STATE OF PUNJAB DURING
OVERLAPPING PERIODS IN EARLY APRIL. WHILE THE
TRAVEL TIME BETWEEN THE TWO SITES IS ABOUT THREE
HOURS AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THEIR CHOICE
WAS COORDINATED BY THE TWO PARTIES, THE PROXIMITY
OF THE TWO MEETINGS EMPHASIZED A COMMON THEME:
FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CPI AND CPM. THE
PRINCIPAL ISSUES DEBATED AT THE TWO CONVENTIONS WERE
THOSE WHICH HAVE DIVIDED THE PARTIES IN THE PAST:
ATTITUDES TOWARD THE EMERGENCY, RELATIONS WITH
"BURGEOIS" PARTIES (SPECIFICALLY, THE CONGRESS
PARTIES AND THE JANATA), AND VIEWS CONCERNING
THE USSR AND THE PRC.

3. AT THE CPI'S CONGRESS, THE PRO-EMERGENCY FACTION WAS
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FORCED TO RECALL AND PUBLICLY TO ATTACK MRS. GANDHI FOR
HAVING TAKEN ANTI-WORKER POSITIONS. THE POLITICAL REPORT
DECLARED THAT THE CPI'S SUPPORT OF THE EMERGENCY WAS
"WRONG". THE CONGRESS AGREED THAT THE CPI SHOULD
HAVE VOTED AGAINST THE 42ND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
BILL. ON THE ISSUE OF RELATIONS WITH "BOURGEOIS" PARTIES,
THE CPI RESOLVED THAT NEITHER THE JANATA NOR THE CONGRESS

PARTIES COULD SAVE THE COUNTRY AND CALLED FOR A "LEFT AND DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL ALTERNATIVE." THE CPI CRITICIZED THE CPM FOR SUPPORTING THE JANATA AND REFUSED TO ABANDON ITS COALITION WITH THE CONGRESS PARTY IN KERALA, AS THE CPM DEMANDED.

4. THE CPI CONGRESS VOICED ITS CONTINUED LOYALTY TO AND ADMIRATION OF THE USSR. EURO-COMMUNISM WAS DUTIFULLY ATTACKED. MAOISM AND THE PRC WERE CRITICIZED AS WAS THE CPM'S POLICY OF MAINTAINING EQUIDISTANCE BETWEEN THE USSR AND THE PRC.

5. THE CPI CONGRESS WAS THUS AN EXERCISE IN REPAIRING PAST DAMAGE AND LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A POPULAR FRONT. FORGIVEN THEIR SINS OF THE PAST, THE CPI'S SENIOR LEADERS WERE CONTINUED IN OFFICE. PARTY UNITY AND DISCIPLINE WERE THE ORDER OF THE DAY.

6. THE TASK OF THE CPM'S CONGRESS WAS TO ENUNCIATE A POLICY WHICH WOULD ALLOW IT TO EXPAND BEYOND ITS BASE IN EASTERN INDIA. RESISTING THE CPI'S DEMAND THAT IT BREAK WITH THE JANATA, THE CPM ADOPTED A "SUPPORT-WITH-OPPOSITION" LINE TO DESCRIBE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RULING PARTY. THE CPM CONGRESS STRUCK A BALANCE IN ITS RESOLUTIONS WHICH, WHILE GENERALLY CRITICAL OF THE JANATA GOVERNMENT'S RECORD TO DATE, RECOGNIZED THE RULING PARTY'S IMPORTANCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THE DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY. MRS. GANDHI'S SHADOW WAS CLEARLY IN THE BACKGROUND, WHEN THIS POSITION WAS ADOPTED.

7. THE CPM CONGRESS DELETED A DRAFT RESOLUTION CONSIDERED TOO CRITICAL OF THE PRC AND MAINTAINED ITS TRADITIONAL LINE OF CRITICIZING THE USSR AND THE PRVLIN EQUAL MEASURE. WHILE REAFFIRMING ITS COMMITMENT TO "PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM," THE CPM WAS LESS CRITICAL OF EURO-COMMUNISM THAN WAS THE CPI.

8. THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP OF THE CPM WAS LARGELY RETAINED BY THE CONGRESS. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS EXPANDED, PRESUMABLY TO REFLECT THE PARTY'S OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING ITS PROGRAMS BEYOND EASTERN INDIA.

9. THE CPI CALLED FOR UNIFICATION OF INDIA'S TWO PRINCIPAL COMMUNIST PARTIES BUT WAS FORCED TO ACCEPT THE CPM'S MORE LIMITED POSITION OF "UNITY IN ACTION." THIS CALLS FOR COMMON FRONTS BY PARTY-SPONSORED ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHERS

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IN THE FIELDS OF LABOR, STUDENTS, ETC. THUS BOTH THE CPI
AND CPM ARE COMMITTED TO THE POPULAR FRONT STRATEGY, BUT
THEY REMAIN DEIVIDED AS TO WHICH PARTIES/GROUPS MERIT IN-
CLUSION IN THE FRONT. THE CPM HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT
REJECTS UNITY WITH THE CPI, IN PARTICULAR BECAUSE OF THE
CPI'S HOSTILITY TOWARD THE JANATA.

10. IN SUM, WE FIND THAT THE CPI AND CPM CONGRESSES WERE
TACTICAL EXERCISES DEVOID OF CHANGE IN FUNDAMENTAL POLICIES.
THE CPI WAS ABLE TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO DEAL WITH ITS PAST
ERRORS BUT DID NOT VEER FRM THE CLASSICAL MARXIST OBJECTIVE
OF ESTABISHING THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

11. WHILE THE CPM'S RHETORIC WAS ALSO LARGELY IN TH CLASSI-
CAL MARXIST MOLD, THERE APPEAR TO BE TENSIONS WITHIN THE PARTY
BETWEEN THEREFORMIST (REVISIONIST) AND REVOLUTIONARY
POSITONS.

THE CPM CONGRESS, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, DID NOT
TAKE A POSITON ON WHETHER THE PARTY'S CURRENT PARTICIPATION

IN THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM WAS IN RECOGNITION THAT
SOCIALISM COULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THAT PATH OR
WHETHER THIS WAS MERELY A STRAGEGY TO PROMOTE THE FINAL
ARMED STRUGGLE.

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12. IN THE WAKE OF THE TWO CONGRESSES, THE CPM SHOWS

GREATER POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH AS A COMPETITOR IN ELECTORAL
POLITICS THAN DOES THE CPI. THIS IS TACITLY RECOGNIZED
BY THE CPI'S ADOPTION OF A STRATEGY OF RIDING THE CPM'S
COAT-TAILS. THE CPM'S FUTURE SUCCESS AT THE POLLS BOTH
IN EASTERN INDIA AND ELSEWHERE WILL, TO A CONSIDERABLE
EXTENT, DEPEND ON THE SUCCESS OF ITS MINISTRY IN WEST
BENGAL. HOWEVER, UNLESS INDIA'S COMMUNIST PARTIES MAKE
SOME FUNDAMENTAL POLICY CHANGES, E.G., ESPOUSE A EURO-
COMMUNIST MODEL FOR INDIA, THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GO
BEYOND THEIR NARROW ELECTORAL BASE. THIS ASSUMES, OF
COURSE, THAT INDIA'S TRADITIONAL POLITICAL FORCES WILL
CONTINUE TO MUDDLE THROUGH AND THAT DEVISIVE PROBLEMS
WILL CONTINUE TO BE ISOLATED. OTHERWISE THE COMMUNISTS
MIGHT FIND THEIR POLITICAL PROSPECTS GREATER THAN HAS
BEEN THE CASE TO DATE.
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